UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

V.

Criminal Action
No. 13-10200-GAO

DZHOKHAR A. TSARNAEV, also
known as Jahar Tsarni,

Defendant.

BEFORE THE HONORABLE GEORGE A. O'TOOLE, JR. UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

STATUS CONFERENCE

John J. Moakley United States Courthouse
Courtroom No. 9
One Courthouse Way
Boston, Massachusetts 02210
Monday, September 23, 2013
10 a.m.

Marcia G. Patrisso, RMR, CRR
Official Court Reporter
John J. Moakley U.S. Courthouse
One Courthouse Way, Room 3510
Boston, Massachusetts 02210
(617) 737-8728

Mechanical Steno - Computer-Aided Transcript

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          On Behalf of the Government
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1 PROCEEDINGS THE CLERK: All rise. 2 3 (The Court enters the courtroom at 9:59 a.m.) THE CLERK: The United States District Court for the 4 District of Massachusetts. 5 Court is in session. Be seated. 7 For an initial status conference, the case of United 8 States versus Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, Docket 13-10200. Will counsel 9 identify yourselves for the record. 10 MR. WEINREB: Good morning, your Honor. William 11 Weinreb for the United States. 12 MR. CHAKRAVARTY: Aloke Chakravarty for the United 13 States. 14 MS. PELLEGRINI: Nadine Pellegrini for the United 15 States. THE COURT: Good morning. 16 MS. CONRAD: Good morning, your Honor. Miriam Conrad, 17 federal public defender for Mr. Tsarnaev. And with me are Judy 18 19 Clarke and assistant public defender Tim Watkins. 20 THE COURT: Good morning. Thank you for the status 21 report. I appreciate that. 22 Let's start with whatever issues there may be with 23 respect to discovery. I guess maybe the place to start is with 24 the defense, who indicated there may be some -- you may be 25 interested in something beyond what you've already gotten. Is

that right?

MS. CONRAD: Yes, your Honor. We do plan to deliver, hopefully by the close of business today, to the government a fairly detailed discovery request letter. But this is not going to be the be-all and end-all discovery request in this case.

We received automatic discovery -- what the government defines as automatic discovery on September 3rd. This included a large amount of digital evidence, including videos and computer and telephone hard drives, but also a number of reports of interviews with witnesses that we're going through.

Notably, missing from that discovery is information such as interviews or grand jury testimony of family members and other information that would -- we would deem to be relevant and, in fact, potentially exculpatory with respect to sentencing.

So the biggest sort of philosophical dispute we have with the government right now is the timing of disclosure of information that would tend to support mitigation of punishment, which, of course, is defined under *Brady* as exculpatory evidence.

It is particularly -- well, I think I would just note, your Honor, that the local rules don't really address the procedure for disclosure of mitigating evidence in a death penalty case. There is timing for disclosure of mitigation in

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     a usual case, but that timing doesn't really work in a
     potential death penalty case where we are obligated to make a
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     presentation to the U.S. Attorney and to the Department of
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     Justice in the coming months about reasons why the government
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     should not seek the death penalty in this case.
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              There are other issues that are relatively less
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     global, if you will, or philosophical in nature, such as
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     questions regarding some of the digital evidence, questions
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     regarding some of the redactions -- in some cases extensive
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     redactions -- that have been made by the government which we
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     feel are unnecessary, especially in light of the fact that we
     have a fairly restrictive protective order in place with
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     respect to the discovery that we have received.
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              Can I just check with my co-counsel for a moment to
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     see if I've missed anything?
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              (Pause.)
              THE COURT: No?
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              MS. CONRAD: That's it for discovery, your Honor.
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     Sorry.
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              THE COURT: Mr. Weinreb?
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              MR. WEINREB: Your Honor, it's the government's view
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     automatic discovery is complete. And although we haven't yet
     received this letter from the defense, I've heard nothing
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     mentioned to date that would fall into the category of
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automatic discovery.

We have provided a great deal of information, in our view, all of the information that we were required to produce under the law. And we've also produced a great deal of additional information just in the event the defense finds it useful in preparation for defense.

We produced a very detailed index to that information; in fact, it's the same index we prepared for ourselves and shared with the defense. And there is a quantity of evidence that has been made available to them at this point just for inspection and review, meaning we haven't actually given them copies of things.

And we actually do intend, over the coming weeks, just as a courtesy to the defense, to produce copies of things that right now are available for inspection and review. But not because they are automatic discovery in our view, simply because it will expedite the case.

Until we get the request from the defense along with whatever legal basis they're going to cite for anything else they believe they deserve, I can't really comment on the government's position on those matters.

THE COURT: Well, we'll let that, I guess, take its course when the formal request is made, and then we'll get a formal response, and I guess we'll deal with that.

You've, in the status report, suggested some timing for that. That seems fine. The defense submission today, and

then I guess it's basically two weeks for the government to respond. I'm not sure -- well, I won't fine-tune it, I guess.

I'm not sure we need to wait after the government's response another two weeks for a motion since you know what you want and you'll know what they have said should be possible to generate the motion, but for the sake of a week or two, I'll go by your dates.

And then I think, just to jump ahead to that, we can set a status conference. You suggested jointly the 12th of November. We actually have matters scheduled then, but the 13th, the next day, is open for us. So if that's okay with counsel, I'd like to schedule it in the afternoon of the 13th of November at two o'clock.

MR. WEINREB: That's fine with the government, your Honor.

MS. CONRAD: Your Honor, Ms. Clarke has obligations out of state on the 13th. If it would be possible to either schedule it -- if it would be possible to schedule it in the morning on the 13th, then that would accommodate her travel schedule, if your Honor would be so kind.

THE COURT: Yes, we could do that, I think. Let me just get the date here.

(Pause.)

THE COURT: That's fine. If we could do it in the morning -- then let's make it ten o'clock in the morning on the

13th.

MR. CHAKRAVARTY: Your Honor, we'd expect to have argument on any motions that we've filed?

THE COURT: Yes. We'll let you know that beforehand, but, yes, that's -- I mean, the timing is such that it would be appropriate to do that. I wouldn't see any reason not to.

MR. WEINREB: Your Honor, as long as we're on the business of scheduling, I would just like to add that the defense has indicated that these are preliminary discovery requests, they may have additional ones. And I understand from things counsel has said on the phone that some of those may be relatively uncontroversial in the sense of they have video but lack the Kodak that's necessary to view a particular piece of video, or there's something redacted that they want unredacted.

We are happy to entertain those in the meantime -there's no need to resolve the initial discovery request -before we get to the next round, if the next round really
doesn't have to deal with the resolution first round. So we
would be more than happy to have those as soon as they're ready
and be prepared to discuss them and, if necessary, argue them
at this status hearing.

MS. CONRAD: That's fine, your Honor. That's what we anticipated doing.

THE COURT: Okay. The more we can do that day, the better.

With respect to -- let me just say something about the protective order that has been entered, jointly proposed by the parties, and, more generally, about sealing matters in the case.

As Judge Bowler indicated in one of her conferences with counsel, she was concerned about the level of sealing and urged people to look at that. And you know that since then I've entered an order unsealing some of the matters that have been sealed.

Unfortunately, our local rule with respect to the impoundment of documents predates CM/ECF and other technological advances and needs to be reconsidered. And our local rules committee is going to undertake that. But pending that, I thought it would be appropriate to have an order regarding -- a procedural order regarding sealed motions. And really, it won't be particularly surprising to anyone. It's simply going to try to add some order to the process.

In brief, I anticipate that the order will say that before something can be filed under seal, there must be a motion to seal explaining the reason why the matter should be placed under seal, and it will include a provision that is in our local rule now that when such a motion is made, it should indicate when the matter might be unsealed.

The order would then provide that after the motion's made there has to be an order granting or denying the motion,

what are the reasons for that, and then if it's granted, the sealed matter may be filed under seal. It's simply to make sure we have a step-by-step record of the application, the order on it, and then the matter, okay?

MR. CHAKRAVARTY: Your Honor, just on that point -THE COURT: Yes.

MR. CHAKRAVARTY: -- customarily when a motion is filed, there's a time for response. In the case of some exigency, should we file and explain whether we've been able to obtain the assent of the other party?

THE COURT: That would be helpful, I guess. And of course, as you know, it's not uncommon in cases like this for matters to be filed under seal and ex parte. As a matter of fact, the bulk of the filings tend to be that in a CJA-regulated case where the defense is required to get approval for various actions. And so those are, of course, ex parte and appropriately under seal. And I think some of the concern that has been voiced about sealing in this case may have come from a lack of familiarity with the ordinary progress of a CJA-controlled case.

So anyway, I anticipate -- there will be nothing really surprising about the order. I just want to be sure that we are turning square corners on these matters. And I hope it won't slow things down. In other words, we're going to try to -- you know, we'll act on the motion to seal as promptly as

possible so the matter can then be placed on the record. And if there's a response to be made, then the time will be started for that response and so on and so forth.

So with respect to the protective order, which is where I started, the protective order provides for some sensitive material -- or information, as defined in the order, to be filed under seal. And I think the order is -- is an order that allows that to be done without further motion as long as it's identified as sensitive as the parties understand that.

I would urge that if that happens -- because some of the examples given were personal medical information or other private identifiers that already are to be -- under the e-filing regimen are already to be redacted, but I would urge that there be a redacted copy of the host document, if possible, placed in the public record with the unredacted filed under seal in case of sensitive information. That's with respect to sort of -- that's a gloss on the protective order.

So I guess the next topic is something that was -- has been addressed last week by filings, and that is when the government expects to be able to file a notice of election with respect to the penalty.

MR. WEINREB: Your Honor, the U.S. Attorney -- under the Department of Justice's own internal guidelines, the U.S. Attorney is to file a -- make a submission to the Attorney

General that includes information that would be useful for the Capital Case Unit in the Department of Justice, and ultimately the Attorney General, to make a decision on whether to authorize the seeking of the death penalty.

The U.S. Attorney intends to make that submission on or before October 31st. The death penalty protocol asks, essentially, the U.S. Attorney to make that no more than 90 days before a death penalty authorization decision needs to be made, so that the Capital Case Unit, the review committee and the Department of Justice, the Attorney General, has sufficient time to consider it.

And just as the defense is invited to provide any input to that decision that they wish to provide to the U.S. Attorney, they also have a second chance to provide input to the Capital Case Unit when the time comes. And so 90 days is the amount that the death penalty protocol asks the government to seek for that.

That is why we have -- we're not asking the Court to set a deadline. We intend to file any notice respecting seeking the death penalty as expeditiously as possible. But if the Court is inclined to set one, then we ask that it be set no earlier than January 31st to allow for that 30-day period for consideration.

MS. CLARKE: Well, we're not -- good morning. We're not asking the Court to set a notice-of-intent or

lack-of-notice-of-intent deadline right now. What we would like the Court to do is direct the delay in the defense submission -- mitigation submission.

We're really talking about a couple of things here, and one is fairness. And the government filed a short brief on Friday about the authority of the Court to weigh in on the scheduling matters. And we can file a brief this week setting forth what we think is the Court's authority to do that, should the Court want us to do that.

We have attached the CJA guideline and Judge Gleeson's memo -- 2008 memo -- which sort of sets forth the reasons that the Court should weigh in on that scheduling. And it was a process by which the Department of Justice was involved. So it's not like some judges have imposed some authority on the Department of Justice; they were involved in the promulgation of that guideline, and it is a guideline that is aimed at fairness and a reasonable opportunity for both sides to do the work necessary to make a reasonably accurate determination whether the government should or should not seek the death penalty.

The government has said in its pleading that gave us an August 23rd deadline initially that we asked for some more time. It's a little bit more complicated than that. The government, without notice to us, without discussion, gave us an August 23 deadline, which was some ten days before

production of any discovery in the case. And we essentially wrote back and said, "You know, this is a big, complex case. We agreed to certain decline extensions that you requested, and we'd request a reasonable opportunity to prepare for this presentation. Post-discovery we'd like to meet with you and talk about it." And without any of that, their meeting and talking about it, the government then decided an October 23rd mitigation submission deadline would be appropriate.

It's in the absence of some pretty critical discovery that we believe that the government has. Now, the government has taken a position with us, "Look, we know what we have, and we don't need you to comment on it." Well, that sort of defies the role of defense counsel, and it seems to me the Attorney General of United States would like to know whether they have accurate information that they're considering in making the determination of whether or not to seek the death penalty.

So we think it's a matter of fairness that the Court should regulate the scheduling process. If the government needs a deadline for the notice of intent, that's a matter for another day. We think that when the government sees our letter, we hope they will reconsider their position on what we view as critical *Brady* exculpatory evidence with regard to penalty.

I recognize that the local rules don't directly address death penalty cases, but the spirit does, because the

spirit is that you get sentencing -- relevant sentencing material prior to the sentencing process. And the Department of Justice making a decision about the death penalty is part of what we really think of as the sentencing process.

So we'd ask that the Court do two things today: One is delay the mitigation submission deadline and set it after we've had an opportunity for the Court to rule on -- or the government to reconsider its own view of what is *Brady*.

I can't stop without reminding the Court that it was at the government's request that the -- and our acquiescence in a collegial sense that they delay the indictment an additional 30 days -- and it was at the government's request and for good reason, the complex complexity of the case, that we agreed to the delay of the initial -- the production of automatic discovery.

So it's a little bit stunning for the government now to say that it's the defense delaying things, and that it's six months after the event that the defense wants more time. We'd be well ahead of the game, had the government not asked for and we accessed, again, an extension of time to file the indictment and an extension of time for the automatic discovery.

So what we would ask the Court to do is vacate the August 23rd deadline and reset that as we -- after we've had an opportunity to convince the government their view of *Brady* is wrong or the Court has reevaluated.

THE COURT: Mr. Weinreb?

MR. WEINREB: Your Honor, the deadline of August 23rd isn't an order of the Court --

THE COURT: I think you're both talking about October 31st.

MR. WEINREB: October 31st. Thank you.

The Attorney General has the -- the law requires the Attorney General to file a notice of intent to seek the death penalty in a case where the government intends to seek it. The law does not require that the Attorney General make that decision in any particular way or on any particular timeline.

We don't question the Court's authority to set a deadline for the Court to file a notice, but how the Attorney General makes up his mind, what information he deems is appropriate to consider, according to what timeline, are all a pure executive function. The deadline that the -- the deadline set by the death penalty protocol are simply internal Justice Department -- Department of Justice matters that the Attorney General has decided upon for the orderly progression of cases within the Department of Justice.

It doesn't clearly -- clearly it doesn't create any rights in the defense, and I don't believe that the defense has any authority to come in here and say that as a matter of what they perceive to be fairness, or what they deem to be a reasonable time, they can subgrade that into a law that then

the Court is free to impose on the government in making this decision.

The Attorney General has deemed this to be a reasonable time and the -- I think that although it's a non-judicable question, we believe -- we think that six months is a reasonable time in a case like this. Although it is true that the defense has not had an opportunity to thoroughly review and comment on every piece of the government's evidence, the U.S. Attorney in this case is fully aware of all the government's evidence, and in order to make this decision, the Attorney General does not need the defense's thorough consideration and commentary on all of it.

What we seek from the defense presentation is whatever they may have come up with through their own investigation of the case. And that, added to what the government has come up with from its investigation, is sufficient to make the recommendation or the decision in this case. So I don't believe the defense's argument is well taken as a matter of law, as a matter of fairness, or as a matter of common sense.

THE COURT: Ms. Clarke?

MS. CLARKE: Your Honor, the government did file something late on Friday, mid-afternoon Friday. If the Court's concerned about its authority, we could file something this week regarding that. And I can tell you that there are two district courts that have said, "We've got the authority to

delay the mitigation submission," and two district courts that say no.

And so I think that the Court can look at that. It's the -- it's really the implementation of Judge Gleeson's memo and the guideline that the Department of Justice did participate in and buy into.

It's of concern that the government believes that it can make a decision -- I don't think the Attorney General of the United States would agree with this. But it's pretty stunning to say that they can make a decision based on what they know without some defense input. They may have a completely erroneous story, that I think the protocol is designed to help -- allow us to help them see a different way. And to just doggedly go forward after getting extensions of time which delay this whole process, at their request, would be unfair.

But on the matter of the Court's authority, we would be happy to file a brief in the next couple of days just at least advising the Court of the status of the case law.

THE COURT: Okay. Well, I think for the time being I will not set a date by which the Court must be notified of the election. I understand the time frame of the protocol. I think not only the brief that Ms. Clarke just referred to from the defense, but also, I'd like to get a sense of the additional discovery requests and the government's response

because that may influence what is a realistic date for notifying the Court.

Let me ask, because we just touched on what further discovery might or might not occur, there was a reference in the status report about substantive motions from the defense. Can you tell us anything about that? Do you anticipate any -- on the discovery you have now. Obviously, if something comes up in additional discovery, that has to be evaluated. But on the discovery now, do you anticipate any substantive motions?

MS. CLARKE: I think our problem is we're -- you know, we received a substantial amount of stuff and we're not in a position really to stake that out right now. We hope to be able to advise the Court now by the 12th of November.

THE COURT: Okay. Let me ask a more pointed question:

Do you anticipate any objection to venue?

MS. CONRAD: I think it's too early to address that, your Honor. We just haven't really thought about it, frankly.

THE COURT: Okay.

MS. CONRAD: Your Honor, may I just ask for clarification on one point? You indicated that you would accept a brief from us on this issue of the Court's authority regarding the death penalty protocol, but you also mentioned you would like to get a sense of the discovery request?

THE COURT: Well, you're going to be filing the

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     request today, I understand.
              MS. CONRAD: Yes. But we hadn't anticipated filing
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     them with the Court; we anticipated just sending them to the
     government. So I don't know if the Court wants us to file them
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     with the Court. If we could, we would probably be asking --
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              THE COURT: I guess so. I guess my chance to be
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     looking at them would be when you move after you're
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     dissatisfied with the government's response.
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              MS. CONRAD: Unless you want us to file them under
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     seal.
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              THE COURT: We can follow the normal practice.
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     don't have to get involved in the negotiations.
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              MS. CONRAD: Okay. Thank you.
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              THE COURT: So I guess that would be after -- on your
     schedule, that would be after October 21st.
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              MS. CONRAD: Right.
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              (Pause.)
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              THE COURT: I guess we have a problem with the date
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     that we suggested. That's what the clerk was passing me a note
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     on. He tells me that the sentencing in United States versus
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     Bulger is set for that morning, so I think it would be
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     impractical to try to have a case conference in this case at
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     the same time.
              So let me look at the calendar.
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              MS. CONRAD: I'm wondering if the 18th or 19th would
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be possible, your Honor?

MR. WEINREB: Your Honor, if I might be heard, I would suggest compressing the schedule then. Because if the Court wants the benefit of defense motion on discovery before the current deadline that the government has set for defense submission, it's not going to get it on the current schedule.

But if the defense is prepared to file their discovery request today, we won't need two weeks to respond. I mean, they'll need two weeks to file a motion. And there's no need then to set the further status conference even further out. I would suggest we set it earlier and the parties simply work out a more compressed schedule to address these matters.

MS. CONRAD: That's fine with us.

THE COURT: Well, how about just taking one week out of each of those periods; that is, the government response to today's request by next Monday, and then the following Monday, the 7th, would be a motion due. And then you want two weeks for the response or do you want to respond faster than that?

MR. WEINREB: Actually, on that score, we would like the two weeks because we have no idea what's coming.

THE COURT: Right. Right. That's fair enough. So that gets us to the 21st of October. So we can move it maybe forward. Actually, we could do it the 1st or 2nd of October -- I'm sorry. I'm in the wrong month.

MS. CLARKE: Will the 4th work?

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              THE COURT: No, the 4th will not work.
              MS. CONRAD: Your Honor, if I may, if the government's
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     goal was to get a status conference before the current deadline
     for the submission to the U.S. Attorney, which I believe is
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     actually October 24th, then --
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              MR. WEINREB: No, that wasn't the goal.
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              MS. CONRAD: Okay. Then I misunderstood.
              MR. WEINREB: It was simply to allow the defense time
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     to file their motions so the Court could have a sense of what
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     the discovery requests are.
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              MS. CONRAD: Okay.
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              THE COURT: How about Friday, November 8th?
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              MS. CLARKE: Your Honor, if it could be a Monday,
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     Tuesday or Wednesday, that would work a whole lot better.
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              (Pause.)
              THE COURT: Let's go back to the 12th of November.
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     have a trial scheduled the previous week, which may go into
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     that week, which is why I avoided the morning before, but we
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     can perhaps work around it. So let's make it ten o'clock on
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     the morning of November 12th for the next status conference.
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              MS. CLARKE: Have we compressed the other deadlines
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     and --
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              THE COURT: Yes, we have compressed the other
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     deadlines but...
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              MS. CLARKE: And we'll still have the hearing on the
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     12th?
              THE COURT: Well, yes, among other things. In other
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     words, that's the next status conference. One thing we can
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     consider are the motions.
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              Any other matters now?
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              MR. WEINREB: Nothing from the government, your Honor.
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              MS. CLARKE: Does the Court have a preference as to
     when we should file the brief this week?
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              THE COURT: No.
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              MS. CLARKE: By Friday?
              THE COURT: By Friday is fine.
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              MS. CLARKE: Thank you, your Honor.
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              THE COURT: So we'll set the next status conference on
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     the 12th of November. The time intervening will be excluded
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     under the Speedy Trial Act pursuant to Section
     3161(h)(7)(B)(ii), complex case requiring additional time. I
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     think that's fairly obvious.
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              Okay. That's all for now. I would -- if counsel for
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     the defense are available, I would like to have a very brief ex
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     parte conference regarding the budget for the case.
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              MS. CLARKE: Thank you, your Honor.
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              THE COURT: We'll be in recess.
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              MR. WEINREB: Thank you, your Honor.
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              MR. CHAKRAVARTY: Thank you, Judge.
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              THE CLERK: All rise for the Court.
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              (The Court exits the courtroom.)
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              THE CLERK: The Court will be in recess.
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              (The proceedings adjourned at 10:33 a.m.)
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                          CERTIFICATE
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              I, Marcia G. Patrisso, RMR, CRR, Official Reporter of
     the United States District Court, do hereby certify that the
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     foregoing transcript constitutes, to the best of my skill and
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     ability, a true and accurate transcription of my stenotype
     notes taken in the matter of Criminal Action No. 13-10200-GAO,
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     United States of America v. Dzhokhar A. Tsarnaev.
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     /s/ Marcia G. Patrisso
     MARCIA G. PATRISSO, RMR, CRR
     Official Court Reporter
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     Date: 9/24/13
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